
PERSPECTIVES

The Global Master of Arts Program: A Graduate's Perspective

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Graduate studies for security cooperation experts provides greater knowledge, expanded horizons, and unique experiences by Mary Sue “Suzy” Sutton. As one of the thirty-three students of the 2006 class of GMAP II, I proudly marched down the aisle to receive my diploma during the graduation ceremony on March 25, 2006. Crossing the stage to receive my Master of Arts in International Relations from The Fletcher School was one of the highlights not only of my career, but also of my life.

What is GMAP II?

The GMAP II is intended for civilian and military personnel serving in the security cooperation field. It is a yearlong program that culminates in a Master of Arts in International Relations from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. The program combines three two-week residency sessions with Internet-mediated study. Presented in trimester form with three courses presented during the first and second trimesters, and two courses plus a thesis in the third trimester, students continue working in their home station/country.

Attendance at three two-week sessions in-residence is mandatory. The first and third sessions are held at The Fletcher School outside Boston, Massachusetts. The second two-week residency is conducted in Washington, D.C. Using a 360 degree interdisciplinary approach, students gain a global perspective that provides a framework for analyzing and understanding today's complex and dynamic world of international affairs.

Personal Insights

The graduation ceremony ended a year of rigorous but rewarding professional work and academic study. This opportunity came from the Defense security cooperation Agency (DSCA) Workforce Improvement initiative. As a student in the public-sector/security focused version of GMAP II, I was privileged to undertake a world-class curriculum taught by an imminent faculty. Their impressive credentials notwithstanding, students felt comfortable addressing most professors by their first names. The faculty, many with a Ph.D. from renowned schools such as Harvard or MIT, shared both academic and practical knowledge and experience. With the former Minister of Defense for Germany conducting the Trans-Atlantic Security Relationship course, a previous Chief Economist for the U.S. Department of Labor teaching transnational labor issues, an employee of the World Trade Organization leading us through the intricacies of international trade, and an attorney who worked in the United Nations Secretariat introducing us to international law and organizations, no one could ask for a better qualified faculty.

Throughout my year of study, contributions made by classmates supplemented faculty expertise and experience. The class consisted of a diverse international mix of mid-level professionals that included Department of Defense counterparts as well as international students from several walks of life. Classmates included diplomats from Cameroon, Canada, Hungary, Indonesia and Eastern

Europe; journalists from Greece and India; a medical doctor from Belgium; a security analyst from the United Kingdom; a financial officer from Nigeria, and Security Assistance Office employees from Chile, Mongolia and Taiwan.

In addition to the GMAP II faculty and fellow students, the staff of The Fletcher School went out of their way to make the experience meaningful. The dean of GMAP personally participated throughout each of the residencies and entertained us at her home during the first residency. In the future, I know I can reach out to a global social and professional network of faculty, friends, and other alumni for guidance and support.

Although the combination of work and study was intense, it was also relevant and revealing. Having completed my year in GMAP II and earned my master's degree, I see world events in a more meaningful manner. I have gained the global perspective necessary to help understand the world of security cooperation today as well as tomorrow. As a recent graduate, I strongly encourage interested security assistance personnel to apply for this unparalleled professional and personal opportunity.